MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
21 December, 1976

AM
10:00 *CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.*

ADMINISTRATION

A. Dates of next meetings: 25 January, 1977
16 February, 1977

B. Minutes of November 1976 meeting.

C. Advertising in Metro Stations - Report.

D. Replacement of Cobblestone and Streetcar Tracks in Georgetown Historic District - Report.

E. Proposed Memorial to Signers of the Declaration of Independence, American Revolution Bicentennial Administration.

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

A. National Park Service, National Capital Region

1. White House Gates - New Gate Posts and Gates, Pennsylvania Avenue Entrance to West Executive Avenue.

2. Temporary Placement of "Three Elements" by Ronald Bladen, North Park, Federal Reserve Board Headquarters.

B. General Services Administration

Washington Technical Institute, Phase II.

C. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Mint

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Employee Award Emblem.

D. D.C. Department of Economic Development

Old Georgetown Act

1. OG 77-39, 3231 Prospect Street, N.W., Residential/Office/Retail Buildings - Resubmission.

2. OG 77-40, 3261 K Street, N.W., Renovation of Existing Buildings for Office/Retail Use and New Apartment Structure - Preliminary Submission.

3. OG 77-21, 1210-14 35th Street, N.W., Three New Single-Family Dwellings - Preliminary Submission.

4. OG 77-42, 3000 M Street, N.W., Construction of Hotel/Commercial/Office Building - Resubmission.

5. Appendix 1.

Shipstead-Luce Act

1. SL 77-10, 4660 Broad Branch Road, N.W., New Single-Family Dwelling.

2. SL 77-11-16, 1614-26 Manchester Lane, N.W., Six New Single-Family Dwellings - Preliminary Submissions.

3. SL 77-20, 1919 F Street, N.W., Twelve-Story Office Building - Resubmission.

4. SL 77-21, 2520 M Street, N.W., New Office Building - Resubmission.

5. Appendix 2.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
21 December, 1976

The meeting convened at 10:10 a.m. in the Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Members Present:
Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Hon. Victorine du Pont Homsey
Hon. Eli S. Jacobs
Hon. Frederick D. Nichols
Hon. Kevin Roche
Hon. George A. Weymouth

Staff Present:
Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Mr. Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
Miss Lynda L. Brown
Mr. Jeffrey R. Carson
Mrs. Sue A. Kohler
Mrs. Nancy N. Lusher

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Dates of next meetings, approved as: 25 January, 1977
22 February, 1977.

B. Minutes of November 1976 meeting, approved.

C. Advertising in Metro Stations - Report. The Secretary reported to the members that the question of allowing advertising in Metro stations had come up again. He said the Commission had previously opposed this, and while nothing definite was being proposed at this time, a letter stating the Commission's interest in any such proposal might be in order. The members agreed that such a letter should be sent.

D. Replacement of Cobblestone and Streetcar Tracks in Georgetown Historic District - Report. The Secretary informed the members that research done by the Georgetown Citizens' Association had revived interest in retaining both the cobblestones and streetcar tracks in the area, especially since a suggestion has been made to reinstate a car line from Washington Circle Metro Station to Georgetown. The Secretary explained that this was being presented for information only and that the Commission was not taking a position on this subject.

E. Proposed Memorial to Signers of the Declaration of Independence, American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. The Secretary reported that the Bicentennial Administration was considering a

memorial to the signers of the Declaration of Independence and needed suggestions in regard to procedure. It is expected to be a modest undertaking with no competition planned for the design. The lake in Constitution Gardens has been mentioned as a possible site.

The Chairman suggested that the staff come up with some suggestions, such as the possibility of landscaping a small urban park area, etc., and the members agreed that this should be done.

II. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

A. National Park Service, National Capital Region

1. White House Gates - New Gate Posts and Gates, Pennsylvania Avenue Entrance to West Executive Avenue. The Secretary showed drawings of the gates proposed for the West Executive Avenue entrance to the White House grounds. Mr. Dickson of the Park Service explained that they would match those at other entrances and that the posts would be limestone, unpainted. Landscaping would be provided behind the gates to help screen the parked cars. The members had no objections and the project was approved. Exhibit A.

2. Temporary Placement of "Three Elements" by Ronald Bladen, North Park, Federal Reserve Board Headquarters. Mrs. Lusher showed photographs of this sculpture, consisting of three metal slabs which would be located temporarily on the grounds of the Federal Reserve System, just north of the building. There was no objection, although the Chairman noted that outdoor placement of this type of sculpture is difficult, and said the Commission should be consulted when the exact positioning of the sculpture is being determined. Exhibit B.

B. General Services Administration

Washington Technical Institute, Phase II. The Assistant Secretary pointed out on a site plan the buildings proposed for this phase of development and explained that they would be similar in color and material to those already erected. He introduced Mr. Charles Bryant, one of the architects, who described in more detail the lay-out of the campus and the buildings planned for Phase II. He said that the cluster concept of education, adopted by the Institute, would be expressed in the configuration and placement of the buildings. The Instructional Resource Center, the hub of the educational concept, would be the tallest structure on the campus and would be placed at the center, so that pedestrian traffic would flow through it from other locations.

Buildings erected under Phase I were poured concrete with brown brick pavers used for walks, etc. Cost has now become a problem, and Mr. Bryant indicated that he may use some masonry panels of a similar

brown brick on the new buildings in order to save money. Also, as the poured concrete proved troublesome, he would probably use precast instead. When asked about the comparison of the two in regard to color and texture, he replied that he expected to achieve a very similar result. The members approved the project unanimously. Exhibit C.

C. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Mint

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Employee Award Emblem. Mrs. Lusher showed the members a drawing of this emblem which is the seal of the Commission worked in metal and colored enamels. It was unanimously approved.

D. D.C. Department of Economic Development

Old Georgetown Act

1. OG 77-39, 3231 Prospect Street, N.W., Residential/Office/Retail Buildings - Resubmission. The Assistant Secretary read to the members their previous action on this project, which asked that the architects investigate the feasibility of a suggestion by Mr. Loren Kieve, a resident of the neighborhood, as to how the height might be further lowered without loss of useable square footage. He introduced Mr. Tobey of the architect's office, who reviewed the height problem and showed slides of a number of buildings in the immediate area which are as high or higher than this project. Mr. William Metcalf, the architect, was introduced next and summarized briefly the points he had made in a letter previously sent to the Commission. He said that after study his firm had rejected the Kieve proposal for a number of reasons, including the loss of 3,250 feet of FAR (particularly the loss of residential space); the reduction in the size of the interior court; the inherent technical difficulties, especially with plumbing and air conditioning; and the undesirable aesthetic effect of a long (352 feet), horizontal, essentially unrelieved facade. Most important, he said, was its failure to meet the urban design standards essential to the project.

Mr. Greenwald, the developer, spoke briefly, asking for the Commission's approval at this time, after many months of discussion and five approvals by the Georgetown Board.

Mr. Vanderpool of the Georgetown Board rose at this point to say that the Board would stand by its approval and believed this project was in harmony with the scale of Georgetown.

Mr. Grosvenor Chapman, architect, representing both the Citizens' Association of Georgetown and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, said he did not think the architects had made any attempt to follow the Commission's instructions. He thought the slides shown were mis-

leading because they showed individual historic buildings with exceptional character; this project not only would lack that character, but would would consist of a long row of 40 foot high construction, not one or two individual buildings. He expressed concern about the deep shadows which would result if another 40 foot row were approved for the empty lot across the street. He did not think the reduction of size of the interior court was important, since it would receive the benefit of more light if the building were lowered; he also noted that such large courts are not really typical of Georgetown. He was afraid approval of this project would set a precedent resulting in similar projects north of M Street.

Mr. Loren Kieve spoke next and agreed with Mr. Chapman that the architects had not really followed the Commission's instructions. He failed to see that any dire results would come from his solution.

Mr. Metcalf then commented that while Mr. Kieve might be expressing the feelings of some of the residents, he did not represent them all, and as many had expressed their approval of the project. The Chairman questioned Mr. Metcalf about providing some vertical accents on the facade so that it would not read like an endless horizontal mass, and he replied that he fully intended to do this but as yet had not had the opportunity to develop any detailed elevations.

In summary, the Chairman said that the Commission had wanted to explore the possibilities in Mr. Kieve's suggestion, but now agreed with the Georgetown Board that while his plan reduced the height, it brought an undesirable horizontal effect - a sort of "barracks" appearance. He said the Commission liked the breakup of masses in the project and the views from Wisconsin Avenue, and thought the retention of an ample courtyard important. He said the members would grant their approval to the preliminary design on the condition that drawings of the facades and their various elements be submitted as the design develops, and that material samples and landscaping plans also be seen. In regard to Mr. Chapman's fear of the precedent, he said that no precedent had been set because the Commission fully intends to review each submission on a case-by-case basis.

2. OG 77-40, 3261 K Street, N.W., Renovation of Existing Buildings for Office/Retail Use and New Apartment Structure - Preliminary Submission. The Assistant Secretary reported that this project would be located on the site of the Rogers-Wilkins flour mill, that it involved some demolition (silos and several garage structures), renovation of existing structures for office and retail use, and the erection of a new apartment building. Three structures would be rehabilitated: the historic Bomford Mill, the 20th century flour mill on K Street, and a small warehouse at the southwest corner of the project. There would be a pedestrian access from the south side of the Canal and proposed rehabilitation of the adjacent District-owned Fish Market

Square. It was noted that the Georgetown Board had not seen the model presented at this meeting, nor had they approved any preliminary designs; they had, however, given their approval to the general concept and the demolition request.

Mr. Rogers, one of the present flour mill owners, was introduced and told the Commission that his family, which had owned the mill since 1914, was leaving because the area had changed. He said he was happy to see that the character of the old mill would be retained in this project.

Mr. Peter Vercelli, the architect, was introduced next and explained his design concept. He noted first that the Whitehurst Freeway is an intrusive element in the area, and he hoped his buildings would act as a sort of bulkhead against it. The new buildings would function as a core to tie the old buildings together, and although the old silos could not be retained, the silo form would be recalled in new structures which would enclose fire stairs and provide room for mechanical equipment. These would be positioned around the project at points of entry. At an intermediate level between Fish Market Square at the Canal and K Street (30 feet below) would be a plaza with retail shops around it, using the old Bomford Mill as a backdrop. The new apartment building would face both the plaza and the Canal, and Mr. Vercelli said he had been particularly concerned that this building relate "softly" to the Canal and hoped that its open, triangular balcony pattern on the plaza side would serve to open up this space. The main theme of Fish Market Square would be the reestablishment of the old flume which brought water from the Canal to the mill. This would be, as reconstructed, a closed circuit water course, no longer connected to the Canal, and would create a waterfall as it dropped from Fish Market Square to the plaza level. As a further reminder of the historic use of the site, old gears from the mill would be set up in the Square as a central "sculptural" element.

In regard to the old buildings, Mr. Vercelli said some changes are planned. At present the old Bomford Mill has three different kinds of sash; these would all be replaced by sheet glass. Also, windows would be opened up on the plaza side of this building. As the industrial windows in the mill building on K Street are too large, they would be divided in a horizontal pattern with only part of the opening glazed.

Mr. Vercelli then discussed the treatment of the old, low warehouse to the west of the mill. The concrete structure would remain and would be visible in part, the rest being covered by bands of brick.

Mr. Chapman asked to comment on this project. He first asked who would control Fish Market Square and was told it is under the jurisdiction of the District Government. He then commented on the new apartment building and said it was too massive for the location. While he was happy that the Bomford Mill would be retained, he thought that

when an old building is restored its sash should be left as is, or replaced with something appropriate to the period of its construction.

The Commission unanimously approved the demolition of the silos and garage structures on the site, with the understanding that the Bomford Mill and the mill and warehouse buildings on K Street would be retained; and that preliminary and working drawings would be submitted to the Georgetown Board and the Commission as the design develops.

3. OG 77-21, 1210-14 35th Street, N.W., Three New Single-Family Dwellings - Preliminary Submission. The Secretary presented this project, a submission for three new houses to be erected in the garden space behind historic Prospect House. He explained that the land was already subdivided and that the Commission has previously seen another proposal for this property. He said the Georgetown Board had seen this new submission and was concerned about the nature of it. Mr. Vanderpool was present and said the siting of the houses high on the hill could cut off the view from the main house. Also, they would be set back a considerable distance from the street, giving them very small back yards and bringing the one farthest north much too close to the old gazebo in the garden. He concurred with the Commission that accurate elevations were needed before the project could be considered further.

Ms. Vytlacil, of the Georgetown Board, said she had serious doubts as to whether anything at all should be built on the site and thought the Commission of Fine Arts had a responsibility to protect the open space around historic structures as well as the structures themselves.

It was agreed that more specific information was needed, and the District Government was advised, "Do not issue permit."

4. OG 77-42, 3000 M Street, N.W., Construction of Hotel/Commercial/Office Building - Resubmission. The Assistant Secretary reviewed this project which had been reduced in size and was submitted the previous month. At that time the size and height of the penthouse and its false windows were questioned. As presented at this meeting, there was only one row of windows, instead of two, and a heavy cornice had been added. Mr. Vanderpool spoke for the Georgetown Board, saying they saw no reason to have any windows in the penthouse and still thought it should be reduced in height and size. Mr. Wright of the Georgetown Board said that if there were a real need for that much penthouse space, perhaps the low buildings on M Street could be raised two or three stories to accommodate it.

Mr. Wheeler, the owner, said his mechanical engineers had recommended keeping the type of heating and ventilation system originally planned, and that he could not eliminate the penthouse with this kind of system. Mr. Roche thought the new design worse than the first one and suggested that all the windows and the cornice be removed. He asked if some of

the large equipment, particularly the cooling tower, could be placed over the garage entrance on 30th Street and simply screened.

The Commission studied the sight lines, and the Chairman told Mr. Wheeler that the height from M Street was not acceptable and asked him to try Mr. Roche's suggestion or some other solution. The District Government was advised, "Do not issue permit."

5. Appendix 1, approved.

Shipstead-Luce Act

1. SL 77-20, 1919 F Street, N.W., Twelve-Story Office Building - Resubmission. The Commission departed from the agenda order and considered this project next. The Assistant Secretary reviewed the previous action, which had been to recommend a reduction in the mass of the new building and the retention of the small townhouses on G Street.

Dr. Lloyd Elliott, president of George Washington University, spoke first and said he had asked the architect, Vlastimil Koubek, to follow the Commission's recommendations: to give more attention to the Lenthal Houses, leave the corner at 19th and G Streets open and make it a more inviting space, tie the scale of the Lenthal Houses to the G Street houses, and set the main building back far enough to maintain the feeling of a low scale along G Street. He stated once more that this is a very important project for the World Bank, the University, and this area of the city.

The landscape architect, Hideo Sasaki, spoke next and said his basic design problem has been that the Lenthal Houses sit so high on the site and are so isolated, making it difficult to tie them to the G Street houses. However, he had followed the Commission's suggestion of continuing a wall along G Street, berming up with ground cover similar to the area in front of the houses. The wall then provides a sense of enclosure in the garden, and the grades to the south of that are stepped to help ease the transition to the level of the Lenthal houses. The waterfall provides a public amenity.

When questioned about the size of these houses, Mr. Koubek said they are three stories high and would be 24 feet deep and that as rebuilt, the first and second floors would tie into the office building. He also pointed out that the distance between the side of the southernmost Lenthal house and the new building was now about 35 feet. When asked why the townhouses had been lowered from their present situation on a berm, he said this had been done so that the floors would line up and the houses could be made usable. He said the greatest drop had been seven feet, with some houses lowered only two to three feet. Mr. Nichols expressed concern that with the houses now only 24 feet deep

they will look like facades only - three story structures only one room deep. Mr. Koubek mentioned the need to remove the houses to develop the space underneath them. The Chairman felt the crux of the problem was still the isolation of the Lenthal Houses and questioned whether they would really be tied into the G Street houses in this scheme.

At this point several concerned citizens were asked to make their statements regarding the project. The first was Mr. Abraham Bell, attorney for Mrs. Obare, the owner of one of the Lenthal Houses. His principal question to the Commission was whether it was appropriate to put these massive buildings behind recognized landmarks at all. Ms. Anne Loikow of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission said the neighbors did not like the sheer mass and bulk of this building in a residential neighborhood. A representative from the Committee for the Campus, Cynthia Witman, said her group had no objection to the University's erecting an income producing building on the site since it would help avoid large tuition increases, byt they did not want the residential character of the area completely eliminated and hoped this would become a transition block from commercial to residential. Ms. Betts Abel of Don't Tear It Down said the height and density of this development was not sympathetic to the nineteenth century character of the block. She was concerned about the use planned for the townhouses and hoped it would be a public one - restaurants, shops, etc. - in order to keep some life on the street.

The Chairman then asked the project representatives about the Ray House (F Street Club). He said the Commission would like to have it remain in its present location if possible. Mr. Herzog from the University said the Club was happy with plans to move the building, and Mr. Koubek said present facilities were really inadequate; with the move two additional buildings would be available for use by the Club. The Chairman said he was not concerned with the Club's point of view when he asked the question, but with the integrity of the building as a landmark and with the appearance of the block along 20th Street. He then asked if there could be a low-scale modern structure to fill in some of the empty space between the last house on G Street and the corner at 19th Street. Mr. Sasaki said they had considered this, but decided that the interjection of a low, modern office structure here would not have sufficient depth to make any sense. The Chairman then suggested that some large trees might help fill in that space. Mrs. Homsey, Mr. Nichols, and Mr. Weymouth indicated they were still worried about the appropriateness and effectiveness of tearing down the G Street houses and reerecting them as essentially new and different structures.

M. Chadenet of the World Bank asked to comment at this point and said he wanted to stress how important it was that the new building, which will house 1,600 employees, be located on this site near the

Bank's other offices. In regard to public use of the building and the townhouses, he said the need for increased security measures would have to be considered; public use of the cafeteria, suggested earlier, would cause difficulties because the cost is subsidized.

The Chairman felt that these problems could be overcome and that this kind of mixed use was important. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission spokesman agreed and siad this was what the residents of the area would like to see. President Elliott, however, thought it was unrealistic to think of using the townhouses as shops. He added that their most recent use was not a public one; and they were not particularly inviting to passers-by; and the University was already providing such facilities nearby along Pennsylvania Avenue. The Chairman suggested that there might be public uses other than shops - perhaps exhibits planned by the World Bank. M. Chadenet said the Bank would consider shops and other uses for these buildings. Mr. Koubek reminded those present that this would be a long-term preservation project and the use of the buildings would probably change over the years.

The Commission members then discussed the proposal among themselves. The Chairman made a memorandum of his reactions, which are appended. The members concurred. Mr. Roche said it was an experiment worth trying. In conclusion, the Chairman said the ideal solution in regard to the historic Ray House would be to keep it where it is. He thought the Lenthal Houses could be better tied to the G Street houses by the use of more plant material along G Street to fill in the empty space between the houses and the 19th Street corner. The solution presented for the G Street houses would be acceptable providing their use was worked out and submitted at a future meeting. A letter was sent to the Mayor summarizing the Commission's recommendations. EXHIBIT D.

2. SL 77-21, 2520 M Street, N.W., New Office Building - Resubmission. Again departing from the agenda order, the Assistant Secretary presented this project next. It was the resubmission of the office section only of this project, and the detailed drawings showed the only significant change to be in the size and shape of the penthouse. According to the architect, Roger Strassman, of Weihe, Black, Jeffries and Strassman, these changes were made for engineering purposes. The project as presented was unanimously approved, and the District of Columbia Government was advised, "Issue permit."

3. SL 77-10, 4660 Broad Branch Road, N.W., New Single-Family Dwelling. Mr. Carson presented this project, which would be a large single-family dwelling of buff brick and wood siding, with a cedar shake roof. It would face southeast on two lots on Broad Branch Road near Albermarle Street, N.W. Mr. Carson said the owners want to save as many trees on the site as possible. The Chairman said he would like to see the design of the gates proposed for the entrance to the property from the park. The Secretary felt that a model should

required for all these Rock Creek Park sites so that the impact of the building on the Park could be better visualized. It was also suggested that all trees be shown and material samples presented. Mr. Jacobs suggested that this be a policy: a model and a full set of landscape drawings must be presented for each project in the Shipstead-Luce area bordering Rock Creek Park. All agreed that this was necessary for future submissions, but there being no other objection to this project, the District Government was advised, "Issue permit."

4. SL 77-11-16, 1614-26 Manchester Lane, N.W., Six New Single-Family Dwellings - Preliminary Submissions. Mr. Carson presented this submission for six identical houses, to be built of wood with some brick veneer in a 1920's English cottage style. Rock Creek Park runs southwest of the site, which is about one-half block from 16th Street near Missouri Avenue. Mr. Carson explained that the site has already been graded, and although there are at present only two lots, the houses as sited - close together on the street with an opening between the second and third houses - would leave ample room for future development at the rear of the 225-foot-deep lots.

The Commission questioned both the density of the development and the row of identical houses, and the project was not approved.

5. Appendix 2, approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Signed,

Charles H. Atherton

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary